

Citizens Coordinating Council Mid-Course Review

Prepared by

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Overview of Mid-Course Review

- ❑ Neutral evaluation of process and functioning of CCC
- ❑ Interviews with 27 individuals, plus additional group interviews and discussions
- ❑ Written report after September 7 presentation

Issues and Findings

- Threshold question: Whether to continue or disband CCC
- Continuation recommended
 - Most interviewees desire continuation because
 - CCC provides vehicle for region-wide focus on clean up and allows regular communication between EPA, DEP, GE, and community representatives
 - Information and site visits are valuable
 - Consent Decree calls for CCC

Issues and Findings

- Improvements needed to support effective continuation
 - Clarify purpose and scope
 - Improve level of engagement from multiple sectors of community
 - Adjust frequency and location of meetings
 - Improve content and atmosphere in meetings
 - Provide process support for high level of engagement and discussion

Purpose and Scope

- ❑ There is clarity about purpose: To provide forum for two-way information exchange and education
- ❑ Need additional clarity about scope:
 - Consent Decree Implementation- EPA Lead
 - PCB issues outside Consent Decree – DEP lead
- ❑ Constraints
- ❑ Proposal: Focus majority of future activities on remediation steps for the Rest of River

Level of Engagement

- ☐ Improve membership to make it more representative
- ☐ Clarify criteria for membership
- ☐ Clarify roles and responsibilities of members

Representative Membership

☐ Issues:

- Several community sectors no longer participate
- Need balance of views to have effective forum

☐ Options for Addressing:

- Reach out to municipal officials and land owners in Rest of River communities
- Structure meetings to address topics of interest or concern to members

Representative Membership

- Examples of interests to add:
 - Land owners affected by Rest of River project
 - Local government officials or representatives
 - Businesses on river or who use river
 - Tribal Interests

Criteria for Membership

CCC members need to:

- ☐ Be willing to commit to
 - attending CCC meetings,
 - participating constructively, and
 - reaching back to their constituency
- ☐ Represent an affected constituency
- ☐ Constituency is needed to achieve balance of membership

Roles and Responsibilities of Members

- ❑ Strive to attend all meetings or send an alternate
- ❑ Bring concerns and information from constituencies to meeting (assumes checking in with them)
- ❑ Accept that each constituency is one segment of larger community, and that all views are important to include in the dialogue
- ❑ Maintain and act with respect in meetings
 - Treat every individual, including those you disagree with, in a way that
 - ❑ gives them the benefit of the doubt,
 - ❑ does not assume negative motives,
 - ❑ avoids accusations, and
 - ❑ is consistent with how you would want to be treated.

Location of Meetings

- ❑ Rest of River projects require involvement of communities south of Pittsfield; thus meeting south of Pittsfield is desirable
- ❑ Potential locations: Lee, Lenox, Great Barrington, Connecticut, and Pittsfield

Frequency of Meetings

- ❑ Frequency to be driven by Rest of River schedule, plus need for discussion of emerging topics on other remediation projects
- ❑ Rest of River products will become available over next two years
- ❑ Meet roughly quarterly, with option of additional meetings as needed
- ❑ Additional informational meetings with EPA or DEP if needed to address specific information needs

Content of Meetings

- Goal: Have engaging discussions in which all can participate constructively and learn
- Issues Proposed in Interviews for Future Meeting Topics
 - Interim Media Protection Goals (IMPGs)
 - Floodplain Restoration
 - Silver Lake
 - Cleanup Decision-making Criteria for Rest of River
 - Capping and Dredging Technologies
 - Alternative Technologies
 - Recontamination Issues
 - Landowners from 1 ½ Mile Reach speaking to landowners from Rest of River

Structure of Meetings

- To improve level of discussion need to:
 - Identify topics in advance
 - Specify a purpose for each discussion
 - Draw on speakers from multiple viewpoints when possible
 - Identify discussion questions in advance, and structure meeting around them
 - Address concerns about unnecessarily revisiting (rehashing) old ground
 - Remain open to public participation

Process Support Requested

- ❑ Facilitation seen as very valuable
- ❑ Advance work on agendas will be time consuming, and would benefit from facilitator involvement
- ❑ Independent facilitator requested by some members
- ❑ Additional support desired:
 - Press releases
 - CCC meeting summaries
 - Fact sheets and digests of reports for public dissemination (e.g. in newsletters)
 - Updates to web site
 - Replace oral updates previously provided at meetings with brief written updates
 - Review CCC effectiveness annually

Summary

- ❑ CCC has existed for six years, since 1998, before Consent Decree was finalized
- ❑ Members who persisted are those who desire an ongoing involvement in the details of the remediation
- ❑ Rest of River activities will affect other interests, who may be more interested in involvement as decisions affecting them become more imminent
- ❑ CCC will need to adjust to encourage that involvement
- ❑ Assessment recommendation: Quarterly, topic-focused meetings, with supplemental meetings outside CCC as needed. This appears to be a feasible structure for engaging new members while continuing to meet needs of long-term membership.